It is not true that 60,000 different formulations, which are hazardous and non-essential, are being sold in the country. There are, however, large number of different branded products of the same drug marketed by both small scale and large scale sectors. Whenever there is a controversy on the continued marketing of a formulation, Government consults experts and expert bodies like Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for their opinion.

The Drug Technical Advisory Board (DIAB), the highest technical body under the Drugs and Cosmatics Act, had examined and did not recommend withdrawal of Analgin from the market. The drug Analgin continues to be marketed in many countries and is a pharmacopoeial drug. The experts and the expert bodies like ICMR had opined that anabolic steroids are essential for certain conditions and recommended its continued marketing for indications like osteoporosis, certain types of anaemia etc. The experts have also considered that Oxyphenbutazone is the drug of choice in gouty arthritis and anaylising spondylitis and therefore continued marketing of the drug has been allowed for the specific indications. The continued marketing of combination of Pencillin and streptomycin was allowed after review by experts. All these drugs however are required to be sold only against the prescription of a Registered Medical Practitioner. The combination of high dose of Oestrogen and Progestrone have been banned by the Government through notification. The experts are engaged in streamlining preparations containing homoglobin for the treatment of anemia.

Gas cracker unit in Assam

2125. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering for the setting up of a gas based cracker project in Assam;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a number of big business houses are interested to finance the project;

(c) what are the down stream industries likely to be approved along with the gas cracker unit in Assam; and

(d) by when the gas cracker project in Assam will be approved?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY): (a) to (d) The Government has approved in principle the idea of establishing a Gas Cracker project in Assam. The Assam State Industrial Development Corporation (ASIDC) has been asked to give the proposed product pattern for the down stream units. Selection of joint sector partner is to be done by the ASIDC.

Expansion of refining capacity of Bongaigaon Refinery

2126. SMT. BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to increase the refining capacity of Bongaigaon Refinery; and

(b) if so, when the work of expansion is due to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY): (a) and (b) The proposal of expansion of the existing capacity of Bongaigaon Refinery by 1.0 million tonnes per annum is under consideration of the Government.

Supply of adulerated coal

2127. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received complaints in the recent past from the consumers including Railways about the supply of adulterated coal which gravely endangers the builders; and